

beneficially utilized for sample aspiration and dispensing in the Nexgen Access System (Beckman Instruments, CA), disclosed in a U.S. patent application serial no. 09/815,088 titled "Method and System for Automated Immunochemistry Analysis," which has been commonly assigned to the assignee of the present invention and relevant parts of which are incorporated by reference herein.

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IN THE CLAIMS:

Please replace the text of claims 1 and 7 with the following text:

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*b1*  
1. (Amended) A clearance seal assembly, comprising:  
a stationary member defining a first side, a second side and an opening connecting the first and second side;  
a moving member moveably disposed through the opening; and  
a sealing member circumferentially disposed between the stationary member and the moving member, wherein the sealing member and the moving member, when assembled, define an initial continuous and uniform gap, having a size that allows the fluid to fill the gap but prevents the fluid from flowing through the gap from the first side to the second side of the opening under an operating pressure differential between the first and the second side, wherein the gap remains continuous and uniform under operating pressure.

*b1*  
7. (Amended) A pump, comprising:  
a housing structure having an internal wall defining a suction chamber for containing a fluid;  
a piston movably disposed within the chamber; and  
a sealing member circumferentially disposed between the housing structure and the piston, the sealing member having a fluid-tight relationship with the housing structure, and the sealing member and the piston, when assembled, defining an initial continuous and uniform gap, wherein the gap has a size that allows the fluid to fill the gap but prevents the fluid from flowing through the gap from the suction chamber to an outside of the chamber under an operating fluid

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